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## A BETTER RESISTANCE | YOU'RE NOT FROM AROUND HERE (7)

February 28, 2021

1 Peter 2:11-12

*<sup>11</sup> Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. <sup>12</sup> Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.*

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### BACKGROUND

Taken from *The Message of 1 Peter* by Edmund Clowney:

“Those who belong to God as his people can have no abiding city here. Like Abraham, they are strangers and pilgrims, even while they live in the world which they will inherit at last. Peter asks his “dear friends” to abstain from sinful desires, as strangers in a sinful world. The verb to abstain fits the calling of strangers. It means literally ‘to distance’ themselves from ‘fleshly lusts’. A temporary resident in a foreign land is not likely to adopt customs of the land through which he is travelling. His standard of values, his lifestyle, is different. Peter wants Christian pilgrims to remember their heavenly citizenship... that they are the people of God, a holy nation, and they dare not conform to the conduct of their neighbors. Instead, they must bear witness by their deeds to the kingdom of light.”

### PURPOSE

To see how Christians are to be attractively different as a result of their true identity and true home in Christ

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Addressing his readers as “beloved” Peter urges them as “sojourners” and “exiles” to live differently from those around them because of their new life in Christ.

Can you think of a time when you felt like an “outsider” or someone who really “stood out” because of your beliefs and values?

2. What do you think Peter means when he urges his readers “to abstain from the passions of the flesh” in verse 12? And “to keep your conduct... honorable” in verse 13? What are some of the challenges to living this way?

### LEADER'S NOTES

**Question 1:** The purpose of this question is to help the group think about some of the practical ways that faith in Jesus makes them different from those around them. This is a challenging question because it asks you to think about how your beliefs and values actually make a meaningful difference. Most people want to fit in with those around them. Yet, faith in Jesus means that your deepest commitments have changed because your very purpose and identity has been completely changed and transformed. This goes beyond mere moral improvement, but it means that the direction of your life has been set heavenward, towards the purposes of God's kingdom.

Practically, this means your faith in Jesus affects your biggest decisions, such as how you

think about work and vocation, money, relationships, time and even where you live. For a Christian, the comforts of this world become increasingly secondary to the deeper joy and the lasting peace that comes from experiencing God's grace and love through Christ.

**Question 2:** This question is an extension of the first question about how faith in Jesus makes Christians different from those around them. First of all, Peter expects that following Jesus is difficult and that his readers will be criticized by others for living godly lives. Yet, the gospel can produce such good deeds that some non-Christians will repent and believe in Jesus and thus glorify God. Peter clearly alludes to the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:16, "let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

"To abstain from the passions of the flesh" means to actively distance yourself from the sinful desires and practices of this world. This includes all the ways that the world around them think about power, sex and money, compared to the way Jesus taught about these things in his sermon on the mount (Matthew 5-7). The priorities and values of God's kingdom are often "upside down" compared to the priorities and values of this world.

There is a helpful description of what it looks like "to keep your conduct honorable" according to the Ten Commandments. This is taken from the Christian lifestyle section of *The Intro to Central Membership Seminar Handbook* for Central Church.

### **A Look at the Ten Commandments ("The Christian Lifestyle")**

God's law expresses two truths: 1) God's law expresses his character, i.e. what he is like, what he loves, what he hates. Since we are created in his image, we can only find fulfillment in a life of law keeping. 2) The law expresses what we were both made and redeemed for. Applying God's Law to Modern Life: Exodus 20:1-17

#### **1. "You shall have no other gods before me" (v. 3).**

- God comes first – nothing else – not power, pleasure, possessions, relationships, sex, money, or selfish ambition. This is God's demand for our exclusive worship. You break it whenever you give to something or someone other than God himself the first place in your thoughts or your affections. For you to keep this first commandment would be, as Jesus said, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength; to make his will your guide and his glory your goal; to put him first in thought, word and deed. God is to be your chief priority as well as your chief delight. Your goal in life is not personal freedom, but "to glorify God and enjoy him forever."

#### **2. "You shall not make for yourself an idol..." (v. 4)**

- In the first command God demands our exclusive worship, and in the second he requires our sincere and spiritual worship. You may not have manufactured a metal image with your hands, but what kind of mental image of God do you hold in your mind? You should not imagine God to be like you, or lower. Love God as he has revealed himself. Worship and serve God only in the way the Scriptures teach. It is no good approaching God with your lips if your heart is far from him.

#### **3. "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God..." (v. 7)**

- The name of God represents the nature of God. Therefore, be serious about God. Treat his

name with reverence and realize that his honor is at stake in everything you do. When you encounter heresy (lies about God), guard his reputation by standing up for the truth. To take God's name in vain is not just a matter of words, but also of thoughts and deeds. Whenever your behavior is inconsistent with your belief, you take God's name in vain. To call God "Lord" and disobey him is to take his name in vain. To call God "Father" and be filled with anxiety and doubts is to deny his name. To take God's name in vain is to talk one way and act another.

#### **4. "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy" (v. 8)**

- To set one day in seven apart is not just a human arrangement or a social convenience. It is God's plan. The human body and mind need rest, and the human spirit needs the opportunity for worship. The Sabbath is therefore a day of rest and a day of worship. It is the Lord's Day, not our day. Use Sunday as a day of worship and fellowship. Treat all time as "God's time" and find true rest in him rather than your accomplishments. You should not only keep the Sabbath yourself, but you should do all you can for the common good to ensure that others do not have to work unnecessarily on this day.

#### **5. "Honor your father and your mother..." (v. 12)**

- Treat your parents and all those in authority with proper love and respect. It is often in their own homes that people, especially young people, are at their most selfish and inconsiderate. It is all too easy to be ungrateful and neglectful. Show your parents due respect and affection. Provide them with financial support and nurturing care when needed.

#### **6. "You shall not murder." (v. 13)**

- Life is sacred. Christians care about all situations where human life is threatened or people are oppressed – abortion, homelessness, hunger, poverty, racism, suicide, euthanasia, and war. But this is not just a prohibition against murder. Jesus said that to be angry with someone without a cause or to be insulting are just as serious. Therefore, you are not to be a person of malice, cruelty, violence, or revenge. You should seek to love your neighbor as yourself in all situations. You must foster the health and preserve the life of others.

#### **7. "You shall not commit adultery." (v. 14)**

- Sex is sacred. You are to honor it as God has created it - an act of intimacy, love, communication, and (God willing) procreation between a man and a woman within the covenant of marriage. This commandment has a far wider application than just unfaithfulness in marriage. It includes any sort of sex outside the marriage relationship for which it was designed. Other expressions of sexuality (such as viewing pornography, giving in to impure fantasies, solitary sexual experience, sexual acts with persons to whom you are not married, and homosexual acts or imaginings) run counter to the creator's intentions for human sexuality. This commandment in fact embraces every abuse of a sacred and beautiful gift of God. Christian couples should view sex as a positive command to seek to serve, please, and fully give themselves to one another.

#### **8. "You shall not steal." (v. 15)**

- To steal is to rob a person of anything that belongs or is due to him or her. Therefore, you are to be impeccably honest. You shouldn't steal time from your employer or cheat on your income taxes. You should not overwork or underpay your staff. Nor should you be miserly or mean. You have not kept this command until you continue in honest work and find yourself in a position to pay your debts and to use your money for the benefit of the poor and the kingdom of God.

**9. “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.” (v. 16)**

- Truth is sacred. You are never to be insincere. You are never to gossip, lie, deliberately exaggerate, or put a “spin” to things that distorts reality or does your neighbor harm. You should always speak the truth in love, and for your neighbor’s good. You should be a peacemaker. You should correct false statements and always be zealous for your neighbor’s reputation. Without being naive, always put the best construction on things.

**10. “You shall not covet...” (v. 17)**

- Be content. Search your heart and mind. Don’t lust for more than you have or for what others have. Don’t worry or be anxious, but delight in the love of Christ, and seek his kingdom and righteousness. Be thankful for all of God’s provisions in your life.